

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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O R 301335Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8503
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
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USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3659

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: JUNE 30, 1978, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 3550 (DTG 271355Z JUN 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. TODAY, JUNE 30, IS THE END OF FORMER
PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANJIYAH'S ULTIMATUM TO PHALANGISTS
TO LEAVE HIS NORTHERN AREA AND ALSO MARKS EXPIRATION OF
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PERIOD AVAILABLE TO CABINET UNDER EMERGENCY LEGISLATION TO
FORCE RETIREMENT OF UNWANTED ARMY OFFICERS. TENSIONS ARE
HIGH IN BEIRUT IN WAKE OF BIQA' MASSACRE OF PHALANGISTS.
SOME 26 GREEK CATHOLIC PHALANGISTS IN SEVERAL
NORTHERN BIQA' VILLAGES WERE KILLED AND PERHAPS ANOTHER
DOZEN ABDUCTED, PROBABLY BY FORCES UNDER CONTROL
OF RIF'AT AL-ASAD, BROTHER OF THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT.

GOL CABINET HAS APPROVED "SECURITY PLAN," WHICH ALREADY BEING IMPLEMENTED, INVOLVING LEBANESE ARMY, LEBANESE POLICE AND SYRIAN ADF. CABINET HAS ACCEPTED NUMBER OF RESIGNATIONS FROM ARMY, BUT APPARENTLY HAS DECIDED NOT TO USE AUTHORITY, EXPIRING TODAY, TO RID THE ARMY OF UNDESIRABLES. SPECIAL UN REPRESENTATIVE MET WITH GOL AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS. DESPITE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, CHRISTIAN AND DRUZE DEPUTIES FROM ALEY AND THE CHOUF. MAY BE WORKING TOGETHER MORE CLOSELY. END SUMMARY.

2. GENERAL SITUATION. FORMER PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANJIYAH'S ULTIMATUM, FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF HIS SON, TONY FRANJIYAH, TO ALL PHALANGISTS IN THE ZGHARTA AREA TO EITHER RESIGN FROM THE PARTY OR LEAVE THE AREA, EXPIRES TODAY. IT IS WIDELY EXPECTED THAT FRANJIYAH WILL BEGIN FORCEFUL ACTION AGAINST WHAT IS LEFT OF THE PHALANGE IN THE NORTH, AND PERHAPS ALSO ELSEWHERE VERY SOON. (SYRIAN ASSISTANCE TO FRANJIYAH MAY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN - SEE PARAGRAPH 4 BELOW). ALSO TODAY, PERIOD UNDER EMERGENCY LEGISLATION UNDER WHICH CABINET COULD FORCE RESIGNATION OF ARMY OFFICERS EXPIRES. GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY WILL NOT FORCE RESIGNATIONS OF MAJORS HADDAD AND SHIDIAC, LEADERS OF RENEGADE ARMY TROOPS ALONG ISRAELI BORDER, AND WILL THEREFORE BE STUCK WITH THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE ON ARMY
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ROLLS FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE.

3. TENSIONS IN BEIRUT. FOLLOWING ARRIVAL IN BEIRUT OF NEWS OF MASSACRE IN NORTHERN BIQA' OF GREEK CATHOLIC PHALANGISTS (PARAGRAPH 4 BELOW), WAVE OF RUMORS, MOSTLY FALSE, SWEEPED BOTH EAST AND WEST BEIRUT ON JUNE 29. IN ONE CASE, A SYRIAN SOLDIER EARLY JUNE 29 ACCIDENTALLY BLEW HIMSELF UP WITH AN RPG NOT FAR FROM PHALANGE HEADQUARTERS, BUT EVENT WAS INTERPRETED AS A BOMB ATTACK AND ENTIRE BOURJ CENTRAL MARKET AREA QUICKLY CLOSED UP FOR THE DAY. TWO PEOPLE WERE SHOT IN ZARIF. MILITIAS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CITY ARE VERY TENSE AND READY FOR ACTION. A FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, POSSIBLE SYRIAN, OVERFLEW WEST BEIRUT AT 0800 JUNE 29 AT ROOFTOP LEVEL.

4. MASSACRE IN THE BIQA'. NIGHT OF JUNE 27-28 SOME 40 MEN, ALL GREEK CATHOLIC AND MOSTLY PHALANGISTS, WERE ABDUCTED FROM SEVERAL VILLAGES IN NORTHERN BIQA'. THIRTY-ONE (ACCORDING TO LATEST REPORTS) HAVE BEEN FOUND DEAD AND A NUMBER ARE STILL MISSING. MASSACRE

MOST PROBABLY THE WORK OF RIF'AT AL-ASAD, BROTHER OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT AND MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED AS ASSISTANCE TO SULEIMAN FRANJIYAH IN HIS INCIPIENT MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE PHALANGE. (SEE BEIRUT 3606). PHALANGE IS ACTING ON ASSUMPTION THAT MASSACRE WAS DIRECTED AGAINST ITSELF. PHALANGE PARTY ORGAN AL-AMAL DESCRIBED THOSE KILLED IN MASSACRE AS "MARTYRS," CLAIMED THEY PAID WITH THEIR BLOOD THE PRICE OF THE LOYALTY AND DEVOTION TO LEBANON, "AND WROTE THAT "WEDNESDAY'S MASSACRE WAS A PRELUDE TO A PLAN TO LIQUIDATE US, . . . WHAT HAS HAPPENED CAN SET OFF A FULL-BLOWN ARMED REBELLION OF WHICH WE CANNOT BUT BE THE VANGUARDS."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 3659

PIERRE GEMAYEL SAID THAT " THE PRESENCE OF LEBANESE, ESPECIALLY PHALANGISTS, IN THE VARIOUS PARTS OF LEBANON - THE BIQA', THE NORTH, THE SOUTH - HAS CONTRIBUTED A GREAT DEAL TO KEEPING

THE HOPE OF A RETURN TO A UNITED LEBANON ALIVE." CAMILLE CHAMOUN, WHO SAID JUNE 28 THAT PERPETRATORS OF THE MASSACRE WERE "NEITHER LEBANESE NOR CIVILIAN," FOLLOWED UP ON JUNE 29 WITH A STATEMENT THAT THEY DEFINITELY WERE NOT ZGHARTAWI FOLLOWERS OF SULEIMAN FRANJIYAH. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, PHALANGE PARTY NEWS AGENCY JUNE 29 REPORTED THAT MEETING OF

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SYRIAN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE IN BEIEUT WITH PIERRE GEMAYEL AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN HAD BEEN CANCELLED. MARONITE LEAGUE LEADER SHAKER ABU SLEIMAN ISSUED STATEMENT IN WHICH HE SAID, "WE DEMAND THAT PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL-ASAD ANNOUNCE A CLEAR POSITION ON THIS UGLY CRIME." GOL CONTINUES TO AVOID ANY CLEAR STATEMENT ON THE EVENT, BUT IS HOLDING SERIES OF CABINET-LEVEL MEETINGS.

5. "SECURITY PLAN." GOL CABINET JUNE 28 APPROVED, IN WORDS OF OFFICIAL NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY, "A NEW SECURITY PLAN DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY." PLAN, DRAWN UP BY ARMY LEADERS, DIRECTORS GENERAL OF INTERNAL SECURITY AND OF GENERAL SECURITY, AND COMMANDER OF ADF, PROVIDES FOR EACH OF THE VARIOUS FORCES TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY "IN DIFFERENT AREAS ALONG GEOGRAPHICAL LINES. . . LEBANESE ARMY UNITS WOULD BE DEPLOYED BETWEEN BEIRUT AND MADFOUN (NEAR BATROUN) ALONG THE COAST AND WITH EXPANSION EAST. . . DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN NORTH-METN AND IN BOTH JBEIL AND KESRWAN . . . ARAB DETERRENT FORCES WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY IN THE AREAS OF ZGHARTA, IH DIN AND BECHARRE." ENGLISH LANGUAGE IKE JUNE 30 COMMENTED THAT "THIS DISTRIBUTION OF FORCES. . . ENCOURAGES THE PARTITIONIST TENDENCIES WHICH LEBANON AT THIS STAGE SHOULD BE DISCOURAGING." LEFTIST AL-WATAN JUNE 27 COMMENTED THAT "THE LEBANESE ARMY IS DESIGNATED TO DEFEND BIKFAYA (THE GEMAYEL FAMILY HOMETOWN). . . THIS IS, A SECURITY PLAN GIVING MAXIMUM MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS TO THE PHALANGE PARTY. THE ARMY IS NOT ONLY BIASED AGAINST THE MOSLEMS AND THE NATIONAL ELEMENTS BUT ALSO AGAINST THE MARONITES OF THE NORTH." NATIONAL MOVEMENT LEADER WALID JUMBLATT, ACCORDING TO AL-WATAN, "INQUIRED WHETHER THE REGIME IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PHALANGE PARTY'S SECURITY."

6. ARMY RESIGNATIONS. ACCORDING TO PRESS AND DATT SOURCES, SOME 44 ARMY OFFICERS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EMERGENCY LEGISLATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH EXPIRES JUNE 30, TO RETIRE EARLY FROM ARMY SERVICE. MOST HAVE NOT BEEN ACTIVE WITHIN THE ARMY STRUCTURE IN ANY CASE. THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING NO ACTION TO FORCE RESIGNATIONS OF ANY

OTHERS. DATT COMMENTS THAT THIS SOLUTION IS "NEXT BEST TO DOING NOTHING." IKE JUNE 29 COMMENTED THAT MOST OF THOSE WHO HAVE SUBMITTED THEIR RESIGNATIONS ARE "MODERATES" AND THAT MOST OF THOSE WHO WERE THE TARGET OF THE ORIGINAL DECREE LAW HAVE NOT RESIGNED.

7. U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE VISIT TO BEIRUT. JAMES JONAH, ACCOMPANIED BY JEAN CLAUDE AIMEE (POLITICAL ADVISOR TO UNIFIL COMMANDER) AND OTHER UN AND UNIFIL OFFICIALS, PAID CALLS ON GOL AND PLO LEADERS JUNE 28. AIMEE CALLED ON U.S. AMBASSADOR JUNE 29 (SEPTTEL).

8. ALEY - CHOUF RAPPROACHEMENT? GREEK ORTHODOX DEPUTY FOR ALEY MOUNIR ABU FADIL HAD A MEETING WITH HIS OWN POLITICAL ALLIES AND WITH CHOUF DRUZE POLITICAL FIGURES, INCLUDING WALID JUMBLATT AND BAHJE TAKIEDDINE (DEPUTY FOR THE CHOUF, AND WALID JUMBLATT'S SPOKESMAN IN PARLIAMENT). GROUP ISSUED A STATEMENT CALLING FOR OVERALL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE FAMILIES OF THE CHOUF AND ALEY. ACCORDING TO ABU FADIL HIMSELF, PORTIONS OF DISCUSSIONS WHICH WERE NOT MADE PUBLIC INCLUDE REMOVAL OF PSP MILITIAS FROM CERTAIN CHOUF AREAS. WALID JUMBLATT IN TURN COMMITTED HIMSELF TO TAKING STEPS TO REMOVE HIS FOLLOWERS FROM SQUATTING IN CHRISTIAN HOUSES IN ALEY DISTRICT. ABU FADIL IS EVEN HOPEFUL THAT A FUTURE MEETING COULD BRING HIMSELF AND WALID JUMBLATT TOGETHER WITH CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL.
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